

A
LETTER
Writ by a
Clergy-Man
TO HIS
NEIGHBOUR.

CONCERNING
The present Circumstances of the King-
dom, and the Allegiance that is due to
the KING and QUEEN.

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TO HIS
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Reverend Sir,

I

Am much concern'd to find you in the Number of those, who scruple submitting to the present Government, and Praying for *William* and *Mary*, our King and Queen. And perhaps your Concernment is as great to understand me in the Number of those that submit; Wherefore it cannot be unseasonable to argue the Case.

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And

And first, I doubt not, but that, as I have submitted, so you stand out by the Impulses of Conscience; for as to the Point of Interest, it's visibly on my side. Take a Survey of *William* and *James*, examine the Accomplishments, Conduct, Religion of both, and can you be in Suspence, which is fittest to Reign? The Life of *William* is Unblemish'd, his Promises are Fate; he never forgot his Servant, nor forsook his Friend; he is of our own Religion, and set up by our Selves, so that it is impossible that he can have either the Will, or the Power to hurt us. *James* is a Man, whose Religion has got so much the Ascendant of his Honour, that his Confessors Dictates, are the Standard of his Gratitude, Justice and Truth; else one would have thought that the first Declaration he made at the Council-Table, in favour of our Church, afterwards repeated in Parliament, his Coronation-Oath, and all the private Assurances lie made to Protect us in our Legal Establishment, as the Reward of the Loyalty, Courage, and Zeal, that we had shew'd against the Bill of Exclusion, and *Monmouth*, should have obliged him to requite us more kindly, than by *Nova Observatio's*, and *Quo Warranto's*, by Reforming our Corporations, and Colleges, the Ecclesiastical Court, and Dispensing Power. The Marquis of *Hallifax*, and Bishop of *Ely*, are memorable Instances of the Esteem and Gratitude he paid to his Servants. And can you believe that *Lewis* the Fourteenth, and *Tyrconnel* the First, have spoke us his Friendship, or procur'd us his Favour? Especially, considering what late Complements

ments we have past on him; at *Salsbury*, and *Westminster*, or rather throughout the Kingdom, by deserting his Army, & voting a Vacancy, conferring the Crown on *William*, and Proclaiming Him King. you won a illizedong He in bad em significacion
 But I desire to Satisfy, what to Bribe your Conscience with you look'd on the Point of Submission as doubtful and disputable, or methinks the Interest of Church and State, shoud determine you; but you seem to be positive; you say you have Sworn to King *James*; and cannot be absolved: I suppose you have taken the three usual Oaths, that of Supremacy, that of Allegiance, and that of Non-resistance; (as it may not unfitly be term'd) by Virtue of the 14. of *Charles 2.* Pray let's examine them apart. on horbor bus ayndid on but eigh mounth tol
 As to the Oath of Non-resistance, your Submission to King *William* implies no Violation of it, nor Departure from it. I have not heard that you took Arms against *James*, nor intend to do; and I am persuad'd King *William* will not press it on you. Clergy-Men are dispensed with, as to the Point of carrying Arms; and therefore, if you have not broken this Oath already, there's no danger that you will have any Temptation to do it: And consequently, it can no way hinder your submitting to *William*; whatsoever it bound you to suffer with Patience at the Hands of *James*. It does not hinder you from putting your self under the Protection of a Milder and Juster Prince, which may be, either by your retiring into his Country, or by his obtaining the Sovereignty of yours, without your help and aid. But in truth, I wonder

der how it comes to pass, that you are so fond of Passive Obedience at this unseasonable Juncture, since you use to boggle at it in better times. If all England had been of that Opinion, and acted accordingly, we had in all probability now, not been a Church, or a Nation; for it's in vain to depend on Miracles in this Age. If Men intend to secure their Lives and Estates, they must do it by force; a Temporal Interest must have a Temporal Security. Indeed, Passive Obedience was a Doctrine very suitable to the Circumstances of the Primitive Christians, who valued not their Lives and Estates, who gloried in Sufferings, took with Joy the spoiling of their Goods, or distributed them to the Poor. In short, it was a Doctrine very proper for them that had no Liberty, and desired no Property; see *Acts 4. 32.* but our Case is very different from theirs; we possess Estates, and have a mind to entail them on our Children, and there is no way to do that, but the Power of the Sword. Without we stand on our Guard, the King, and a few Villains about him, might cut all the Throats, and amass all the Wealth of the Kingdom. You had best therefore, either conform your Practice to the Doctrine of the Primitive Christians, or else reform their Doctrine as to the point of Obedience, by the Practice of the present Times. However the Primitive Christians submitted even to Usurpers and Tyrants; and how much more then, would they to such a Prince, as by the Consent of our Senate, fills the Throne of the Kingdoms?

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Let us proceed next to the Oath of Allegiance. And first, I desire you to consider, that it is not of such a perpetual Obligation, but that in some Cases and Times, a Christian may be absolved from it. It's the Custom of *England*, to Naturalize Foreigners, who yet had Sworn Allegiance to their own Princes Abroad, without consulting those Princes, and asking their leave. And it's the Custom of Foreign Princes to Naturalize the Subjects of *England*, without asking leave of our King and Parliament, whereby their Allegiance is transferred unto the Sovereignty unto which they submit, and consequently it dyes here. Now, if this Practice involved Perjury, it's impossible that ever it could have obtained, or at least been so long and generally used in Christian Kingdoms and States. *Cicero*, and after him *Grotius*, thinks it a part, nay the Foundation of every Man's Liberty, to be a Subject to what Prince or State he pleases. And this is very suitable to our Saviour's Advice, of fleeing to another City, when we are persecuted in our own; and to the Command given the Apostles, of Preaching the Gospel to all Nations; whereby he made them as it were Natural Subjects to the Sovereignty of every Place where they came, that they might without scruple pay Allegiance to it, and receive its Protection.

Thus you see the Oath of Allegiance is capable of some Restriction and Limitation, tho' the Words seem to imply the contrary. Now, this is very applicable to our Case; for tho' we have not forsaken our Country, and retired to a Foreign State, a Foreign Prince has obtained the Sovereignty

Sovereignty of ours, which is just as much, as if we had submitted to his Sovereignty Abroad; for Subjection and Sovereignty are related, which cannot subsist apart. If James retained his Sovereignty, the Oath of Allegiance to him were binding, but since he has lost that, your Obligation falls of course, or rather accrues to his Successor the King that Reigns.

This will still more appear, if you consider, that your Allegiance bound you only by Virtue of the Constitution of England, whereof you were a Member, and James the Head. But that Constitution has been entirely dissolved; and consequently all the Obligations that it imposed, are Null and Void. Now that our Government was dissolved, not to insist on the hard Words of the Lawyers, these two things indisputably Evince. The King's Disbanding his Army, and submitting himself to the Prince of ORANGE, which he did by inviting him to St. James's, and yielding himself to the Prince's Guards, when he might have avoided both. This was a down-right Departure from his Independent and Royal Power; and consequently, a Solemn Abolition of his Subjects from their Allegiance. There has never anything been dissentient more helterously from a King of England, by his Subjects, than a Submission to a Foreign Power, for indeed they cannot Serve nor Obey such a Prince, according to the Constitution of this Government; By their Oaths, y^e they Abjure and Renounce all Foreign Princes and Powers, and acknowledge ^{themselves} Independent. Now, when he himself submits to a Foreign Power, he either involves his Subjects in a per-

a Perjury, or Absolves them from their Oaths: Which as it takes in the Oath of Supremacy, so it makes way for the third Answer that I intend to give your Objection from the Obligation of your Oaths. If the Government was not dissolved, and your Oaths in force, as the greater Part of the Nation, so you in particular are Perjured. Your Oath of Allegiance binds you to defend the King to the utmost of your Power, against all Conspirators, and Attempts whatsoever. Now, I ask, Did you take up Arms for King *James*? Did you follow him into the *West*, or send any Body thither to Assist and Defend his Person and Honour? If not, your Oath is broken, your Allegiance violated, and consequently, of no force, till it be renounced. But lest you should excuse your self, by your Character, from Feats of Arms; let me ask, whether you pray'd heartily for the King's Success against the Prince and his Army? Did you say, *Abate their Pride, Affwage their Malice, and Confound their Devices*? if not, what pretence can you have to Allegiance and Loyalty? But to render the Violation of your Allegiance still more unquestionable; you have appeared directly against King *James*; you were at the Election of Convention-Men t'other Day, very busy about forming an Interest for a Gentleman that had kept his Oath of Allegiance, and defended the King as much as your self. Pray see by what Law, Statute, or Ordinance was you there, or gave you your Vote? Certainly, if the King's submitting Himself, his Crown and Dignity, to a Foreign Prince, did not dissolve the Government, and

return the Kingdom to a State of Nature ; your meeting there , was an open Violation of your Allegiance ; a down-right Evil , or rather Rebellion . And if ever *James* should recover his Power , he would consider you as a Traitor . You knew , that he had no kindness for Parliaments , much less for Conventions ; and would you then at once cross your Prince's Will , and the established Laws , by chusing without a Writ ? Or if you chose , why would you pitch on Men incensed and provoked against the Court , by the loss of their Interest , Honours , and Offices , because they would not comply with its Designs ? What , I pray , could you expect from such an illegal Choice of angry and injured Men , but the Vote for a Vacancy ? If. you had intended to Rescue and Restore the King , you should have made a Muster instead of an Election , and appointed Officers instead of Representatives ; the Country should have Risen in Arms , and declared for the King , who alone could Summon a Parliament according to Law . But now , since you took the safer way , and chose by Virtue of the Prince of *ORAGNE*'s Writs , you acknowledged his Authority , and Signed , by his Hand , to all the Acts of the Convention ; they act in your Name , and by your Power ; and therefore , what ever they do , is yours . Your Choice of them , proves that you considered the Constitution as dissolved , and bespoke a new one , such as they should think fit ; for you gave them no Instructions , nor Limitions ; so , that , they might have perpetuated their Power , had they pleased . Now , that they have named a new King , the Act is yours , and you are bound

bound to Obey him ; for had they Recalled the last , they had confess themselves Traytors , and those that empow'rd them ; nay , they had been false to their Trust ; for they had acted contrary to the Example and Desire of those that elected them . A Vote in the House of Commons , after a Free Election , gives the Pulse of the Nation ; thereby it's plain , that the greater Part thought the late King had falm from his Right . Now , if there be any that would not have themselves included , they ought not barely to disobey , but to Protest and Rise in Arms , before the Constitution takes Root ; else , tho' they Dissent , they are virtually included , and suppos'd in Law to agree . If you like not the Acts of Parliament , where are your Powers ? For either you ought to submit to their Decrees , or call them to an Account for Abusing your Confidence . To rail at their Proceedings , and yet to shelter your self under their Protection , is a Contradiction , which methinks , should not be Digested by a Conscience so tender as yours .

And hereby , you may satisfy some of your Neighbours , that perhaps were not at the Election ; For their Case is the same as yours , except they publickly disown'd and oppos'd it . Every Freeholder is either personally , or virtually at the Election ; and as to the Law , it's no matter which ; Indeed , this Juncture required every Man's personal Appearance , either to Rebuke , Correct , and Resist , or to Approve and Further the Choice , according as every man thought the Government Dissolv'd or in Being .

In general, That a Government may be dissolv'd, is not to be disputed. The four great Monarchies had their Periods; and almost all the Kingdoms and States in *Europe*, and a greater part of *Asia*, rose out of the Ruins of the last. Particularly, *England* is now a Kingdom, that was once a Branch of the *Roman* Empire. And as little is it to be questioned, whether a Christian ought to submit to the Government he finds in being. This the Apostle warrants, Rom. 13. 1. *The Powers that be*, (that is, the present Powers, the Prince that is in Possession of the Crown, which takes away all defects) are *ordained of God*. Our Saviour paid Tribute to *Cæsar*, who could pretend no Right, but Conquest over the *Jews*, and that of no great standing. The Lawyers may talk of Prescription, and the Right accruing to the Possessor upon it; but to us, that understand not Law, the plainness and Simplicity of the Gospel must be supposed to give a more intelligible Rule. I don't remember, that ever I heard or read it determined, how many years make a Prescription for a Sovereign Right. I am sure, *Nullum tempus occurrit Regi*, is a Maxim of the Law of *England*, and *Edward the Fourth* is an Instance of it, who thought not his Title prejudiced by three *Henries* of the House of *Lancaster*, who Successively held the Throne. To be sure, the Law of *England* takes no notice of such a thing as Prescription in the Point of Sovereignty; nor appoints any Court wherein it's to be tried; and consequently, it's rational to believe, That it intends we should submit to the Prince that Reigns; and this seems to be

be the Principle of the Gospel it self, which does not oblige its Votaries to Scan and Examine the Titles of Princes, nor to wage War against Usurpers; but rather quietly to submit to those that are possest of the Power, till Justice be softned into Mercy, and Law exalted into Love; till Righteousness be universally practiced, that there be nothing for Power and Law, for Courts and Judges to do.

But if at any time a Government can be dissolved, and if ever Christians might submit to a new Government erected on the Ruins of a former; ours is the Government, and we are the Christians. King *James* submitted to the Prince of *ORANGE*, by offering him his Palace, and going under his Guards; the People have submitted to him, by obeying his Writs; and lastly, the Representatives, who had an unbounded and unlimited Power, chose and proclaim'd him King, as the just Rewards of the glorious Delivery he hath wrought for our Church and State; you your self have had a share in all this, first, by not assisting King *James*, neither by your Person, Purse, nor Prayers; and then by chusing the Convention-Men, who have set things on this bottom. Now, if your Conscience condemns you for what you have done, you ought to keep a *Lent* extraordinary for it; only let me tell you, That this is a Sin for which you may repent, but which you can never retrieve. To dissolve a Government, is like Murder or Adultery; it's an Injury not to be redressed, a loss not to be recovered. Nay, in pretending to redress what's past, you commit a new Offence: Your Allegiance is now translated to King *William* by your chusing him; and therefore to resist him, will be at once a Rebellion and Perjury. But

But to conclude; If you are consistent with your self, you must submit to the King you have chosen; if not, that you must submit to him as a Conqueror; it's somewhat invidious to give him that Title; but it belongs to him, as much as to *William* the I. Indeed, he has not conquered the Kingdom by Force, but by Charms; not by Violence, but by Goodness and Virtue. In short; he had no War with *England*, but only with the King, and a few of his Ministers; and therefore the Victory can endamage none but them. Now the Justice of the War, warrants him to carry his Success as far as he can. Till the Birth of him that was called the Prince of *Wales*, His Princess was the Heir Presumptive to three Kingdoms. Now, that Birth was not so very well attested, as to leave no Suspicions of an Imposture; the Prince desires a Tryal before the Parliament of *England*; the King resolves to have no Parliament, or one that should be packt; of this the Prince complains, but in vain; whereupon he was concern'd to vindicate his Princess's Title by the Sword, seeing all other means were deni'd; and was ever War undertaken upon a more weighty, or a juster Cause? For tho' the Prince of *Wales* had been Genuine; yet if he was not sufficiently known to be so, or at least pronounc'd so by the Supreme Court of the Nation, the Prince's Cause was just. But now, in a just War, the offended Party is not bound to redress the Injuries done to him, and no more; no, no, all advantages may be taken, that interfere not with the Law of Nations. It's just that the Prince of *ORANGE* should not only Redress the Injury that provok'd him to Arms, but also pay himself for the Charges he has expended, and the Risques he has run,

run, and the Loss he must have sustain'd, had he been beaten in the Field; which was no less than of three Kingdoms, besides, perhaps his Life, and that of the Princes.

Let you and me therefore submit to a King that has obtained the Kingdom by so just a War, with so little Effusion of Blood, and thank God that the Head of our Church, is at once her Ornament and Security. Let us pray for *James*, as for our Enemy, that God will sanctify his Afflictions, turn his Heart from Idolatry and Cruelty, and prepare him for Heaven. Let us pray for *William* as the Deliverer of our Church, and Defender of our Faith; and hope from him all those Favours that may make our Church and Island the Delight of God, and the Envy of Men. I am,

Reverend Sir,

With all Sincerity,

Tours;

F I N I S.

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